

MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Directors

FROM: Marcia Adams, Executive Director

SUBJECT: 2019 Novel Coronavirus

DATE: March 17, 2020

This past weekend, Governor Henry McMaster directed South Carolina agencies and higher education institutions to engage in proactive measures to help safeguard the health and safety of the their workplaces by maximizing telecommuting flexibilities to eligible workers within populations that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified as being at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 and CDC-identified special populations. Agencies were also encouraged to extend telecommuting flexibilities more broadly to accommodate state and local responses to COVID-19, including, but not limited to, extending telework flexibilities for employees affected by school closures. We appreciate your commitment to protecting state employees and our citizens.

State Government in South Carolina is open and is still continuing to provide services and programs to South Carolinians throughout this public health event. Agencies provide critical services to our state throughout the year, but those services are even more important to our citizens during this unprecedented time. Therefore, agencies must maintain staffing levels and coverage in order to ensure they can continue to deliver their agency mission critical services to the citizens. This means that employees who are necessary to the continuity of operations may be directed to report to work as needed within the sole discretion of the agency head or his/her designee.

The level of staffing needed will differ for each agency based on its unique role in state government. Each agency head and his/her leadership team will need to determine the amount of staff needed to continue to keep all offices open and provide services to the citizens of South Carolina. Staff members who are not needed in the workplace to keep offices open and continue to provide services to the public should be given the opportunity to telecommute if their job duties permit it and/or the agency has work that they can perform at home. Using telecommuting to reduce the number of staff in offices to the extent possible is recommended as a tool to promote social distancing and slow the spread of COVID-19.



We encourage agencies to expand the use of telecommuting to slow the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring state government remains open and operational to serve citizens.

Agencies should think creatively about telecommuting and ask managers to identify projects that may be outside employee's normal job duties, but serve the agency's mission and can be performed at home. If staff are not essential to keeping offices open and continuing to provide services and telecommuting is not possible for the employee, leave-accruing employees may use sick leave and any other form of accrued leave.

As a reminder, employees **may not** be compensated for time not worked. All employees that are not in the workplace must either be telecommuting, using accrued or advanced leave, or in a no pay status.

For staff that remain in the offices and workplaces to ensure continuity of operations and programs, please work to identify ways to promote social distancing. As examples, staff could spread out and work in conference rooms or other open spaces to avoid congregation of staff in close quarters. Agency leaders should consider other social distancing measures such as temporarily implementing shifts, alternating work schedules, or staggering staff that are in the office.

The Department of Administration will continue to closely monitor developments related to COVID-19 and provide additional guidance as needed. If you have questions regarding telecommuting, please contact Karen Wingo, Director of the Division of State Human Resources (803-422-8645), or me.